



Boston's Open Space Plan

2015-2021

AGENDA

What is the Open Space Plan?

What planning work has been done so far?

Survey Findings &
Neighborhood Analysis to date

Goals & Objectives for the
Open Space Plan

Remaining work & schedule



There are all kinds of open space



Open Space Plans are both a Requirement and an Opportunity



Massachusetts requires cities and towns to complete an Open Space Plan every 7 years to be eligible for state grants.

REQUIREMENTS

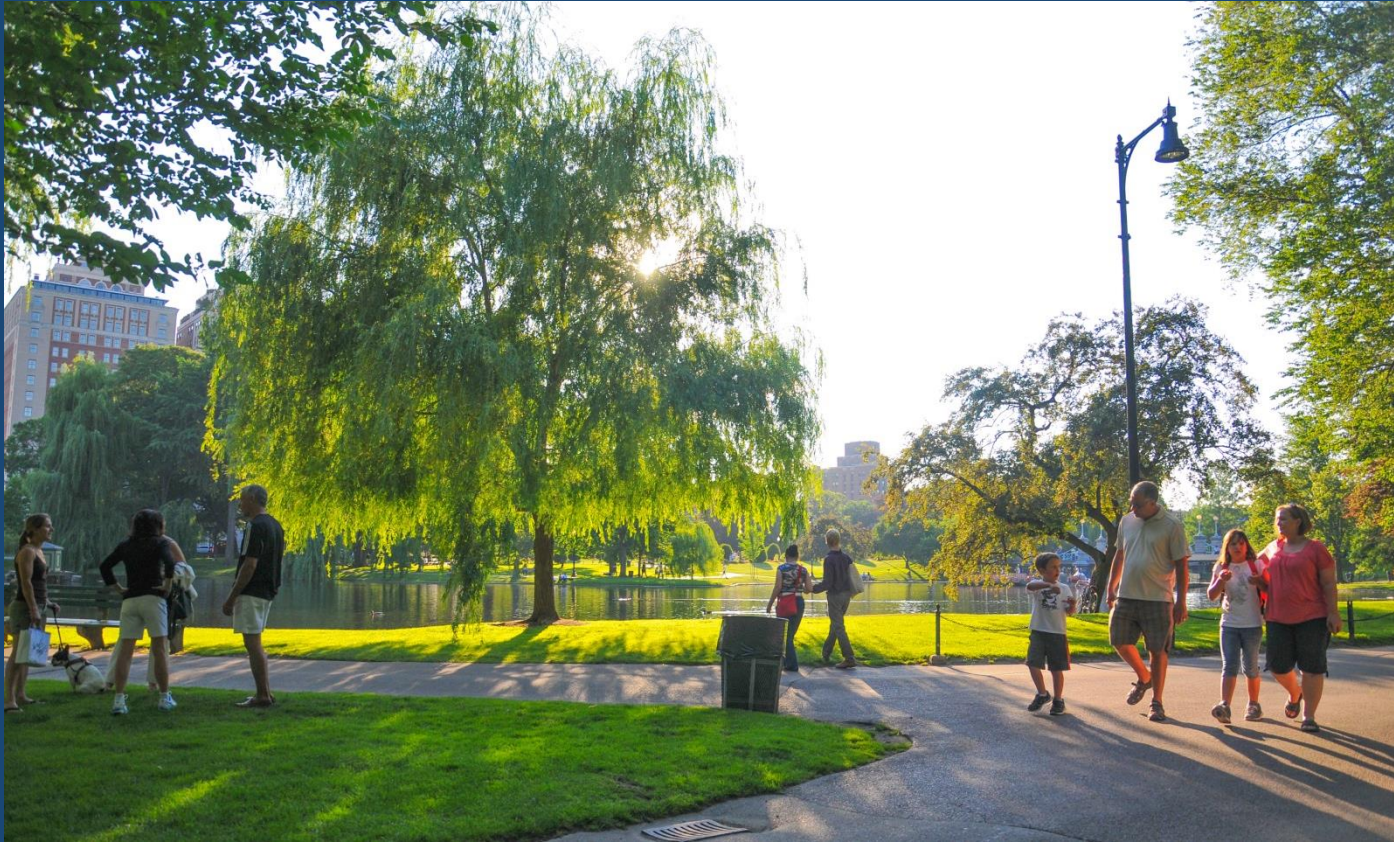
- Inventory of Lands
- Environmental Inventory and Analysis
- Goals and Objectives

OPPORTUNITIES

- Assess the land we have
- Consider what we want
- Identify Opportunities
- Plan for the City's Future

The Open Space Plan includes all Boston open space areas regardless of ownership. Boston Parks and Recreation is leading the development of the plan, but park lands owned by other entities, like the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation, are included.

Open Space Plans are both a Requirement and an Opportunity



The Open Space Plan is a guide for maintaining and enhancing the benefits of our open space system and protecting the green infrastructure of our city.

Open Space Plan Outline

Community Setting

Environmental Analysis

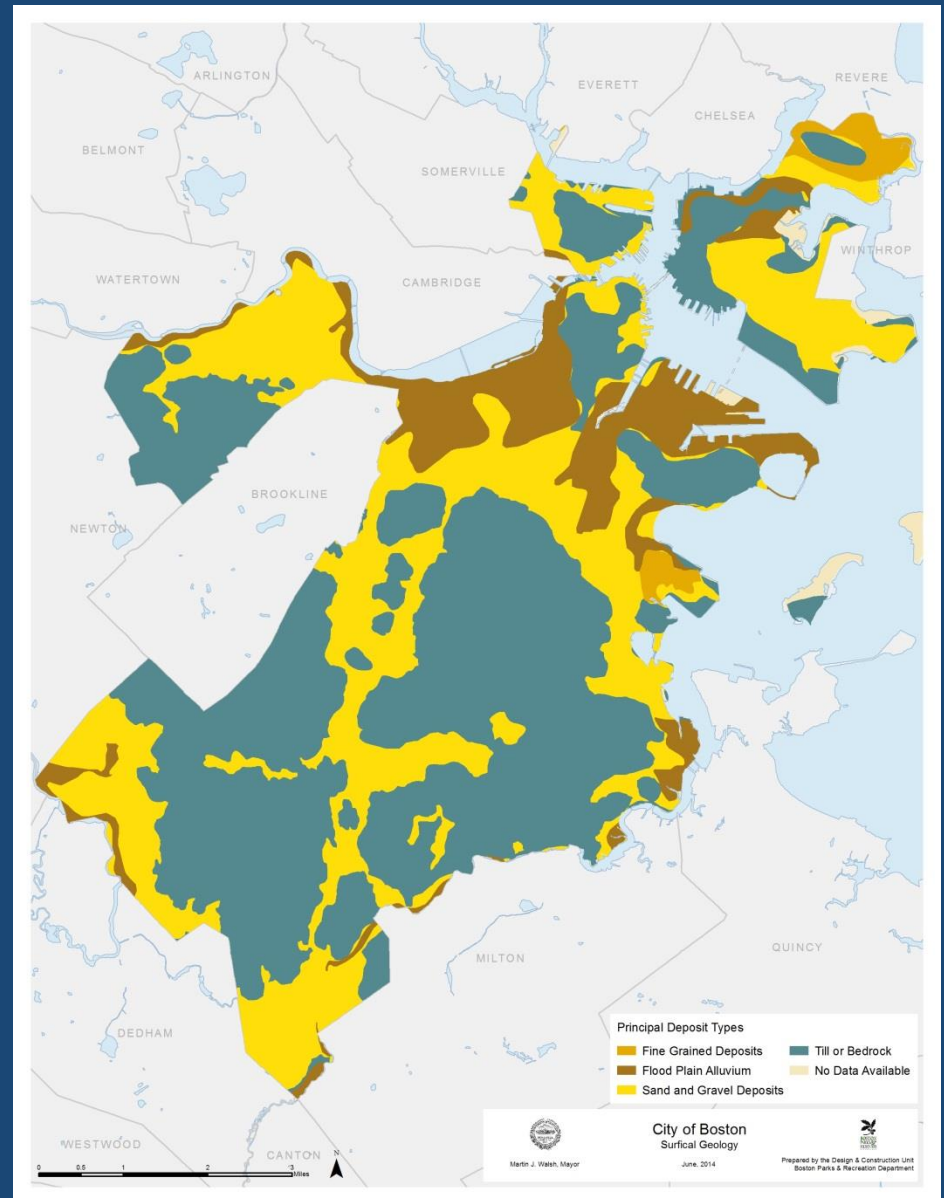
Inventory of Lands

* Community Vision

* Analysis of Needs

* Framework Goals and Objectives

7 Year Action Plan



Open Space Plan Schedule

Spring - Summer 2013

- SURVEY made available May 2013
- 1st round of Community meetings city-wide

Fall - Winter 2013 - 2014

- SURVEY closed November 2013
- Draft Maps and Tables

Spring 2014

- Analyze Data and Public Input
- Draft text

June 2014

- Develop neighborhood based open space inventory and analysis

July - Aug 2014

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August - Sept 2014

- Finalize data and analysis
- Compile full document

Oct - Nov 2014

- Post draft Open Space Plan for public comment

Complete Document
December 2014

What sort of questions were in the survey?

What ACTIVITIES do you like to do when you visit a park?

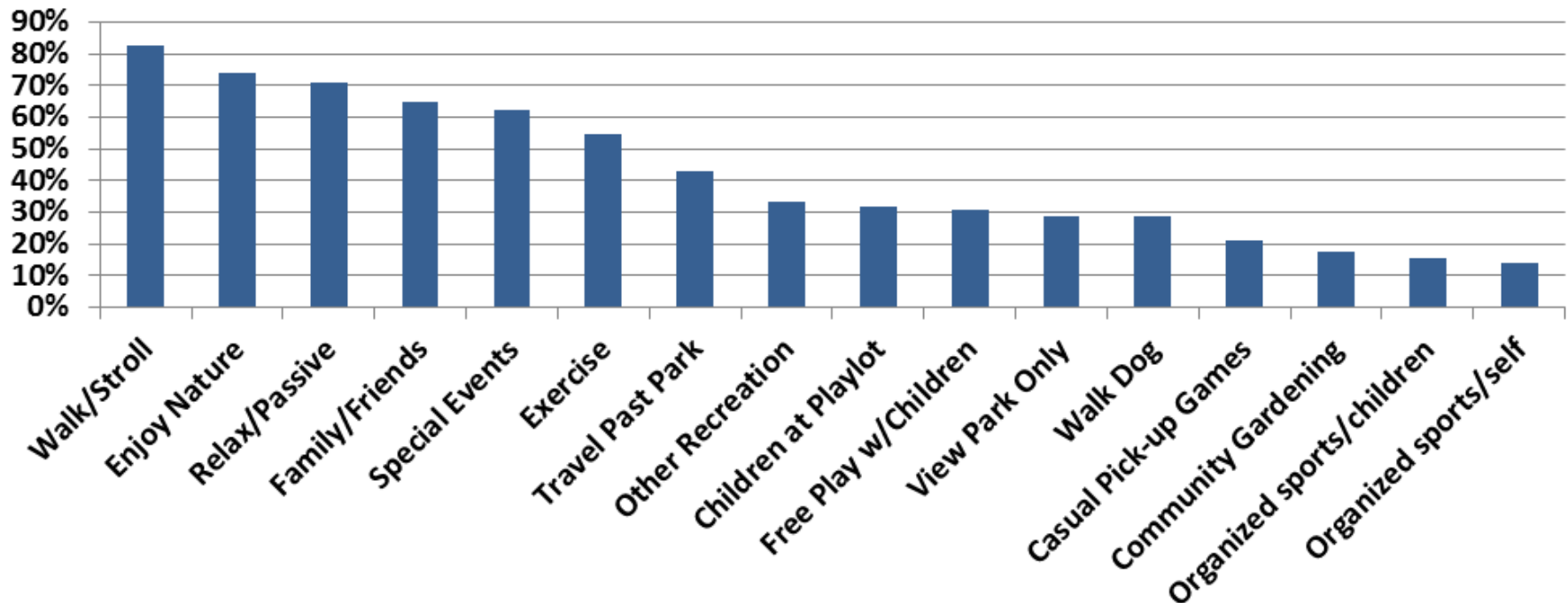
What FEATURES do you use? (Ballfields? Tot lots? Walking paths?)

What are your priorities for the SERVICES the Parks Department provides in maintaining and improving parks?

And a few questions about you and your neighborhood.

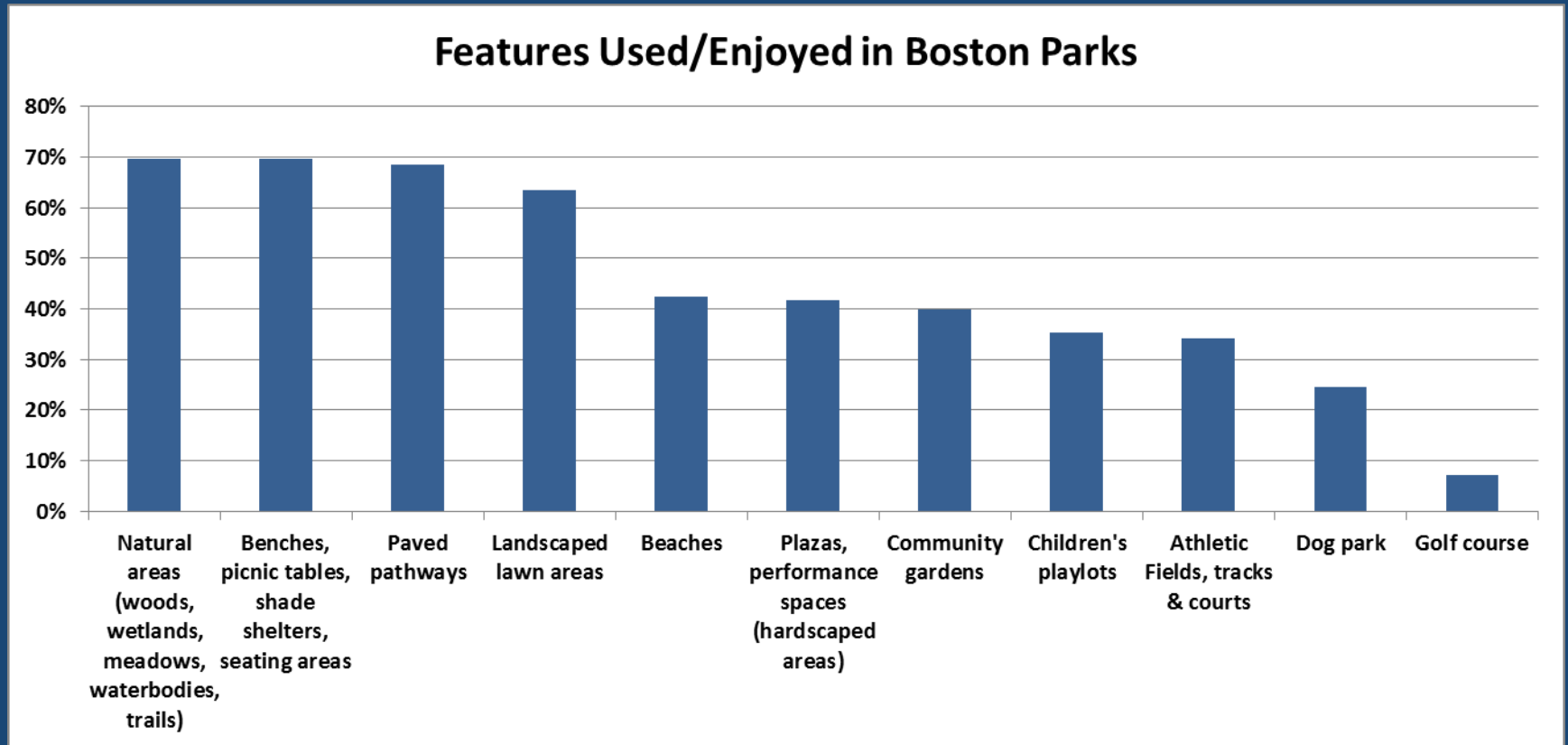
Key Findings from the Citywide Survey Results

Activity Pursued in Boston Parks



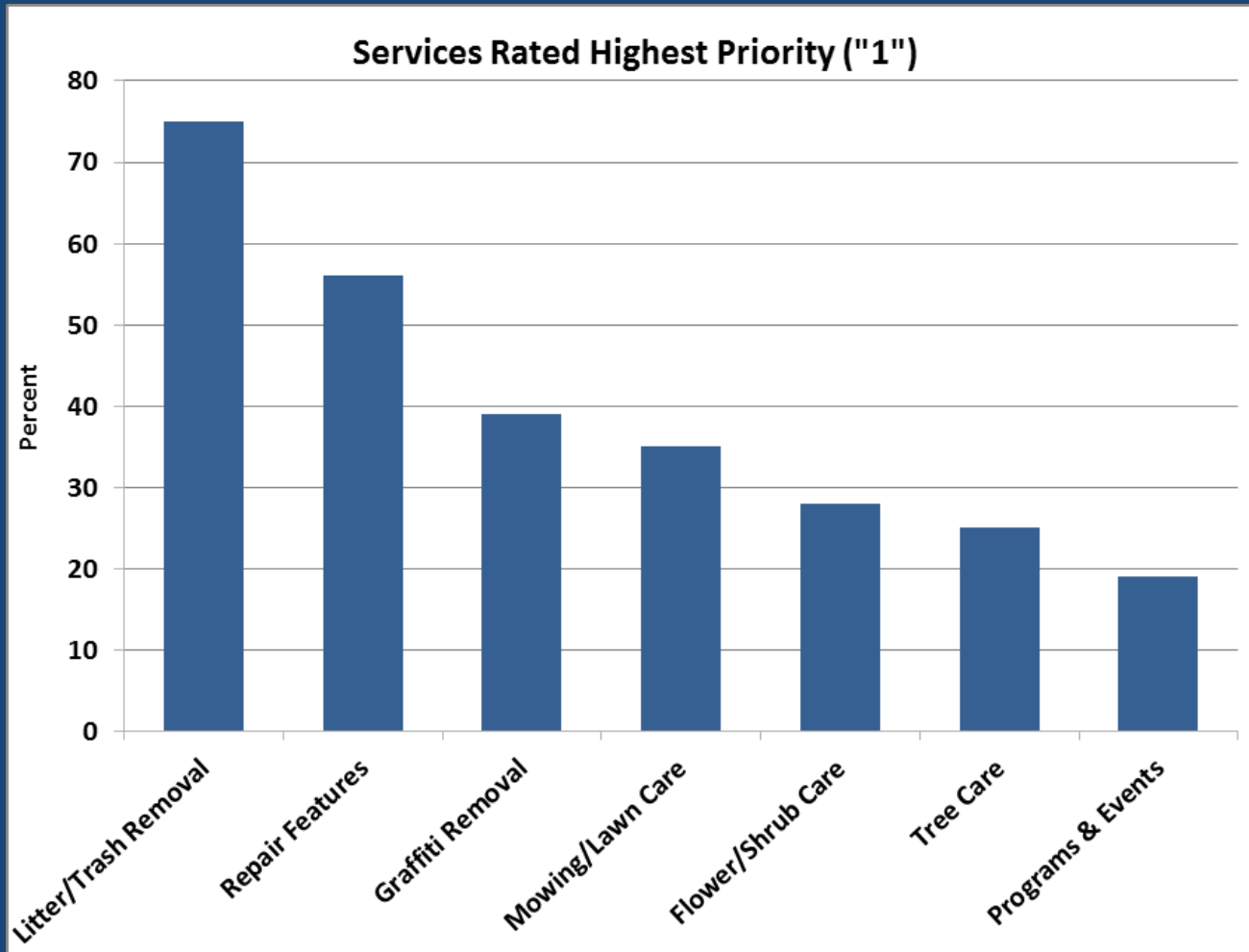
Question: What ACTIVITIES do you like to do when you visit a park?

Key Findings from the Citywide Survey Results



Question: What FEATURES do you use most when you visit a park?

Key Findings from the Citywide Survey Results

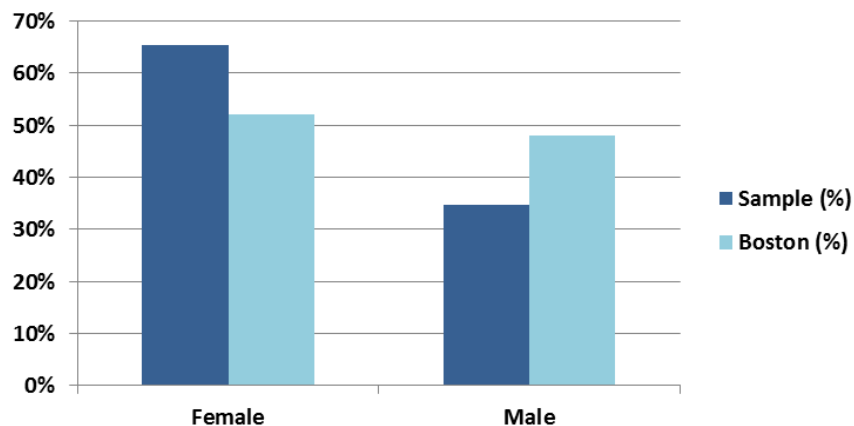


Question:

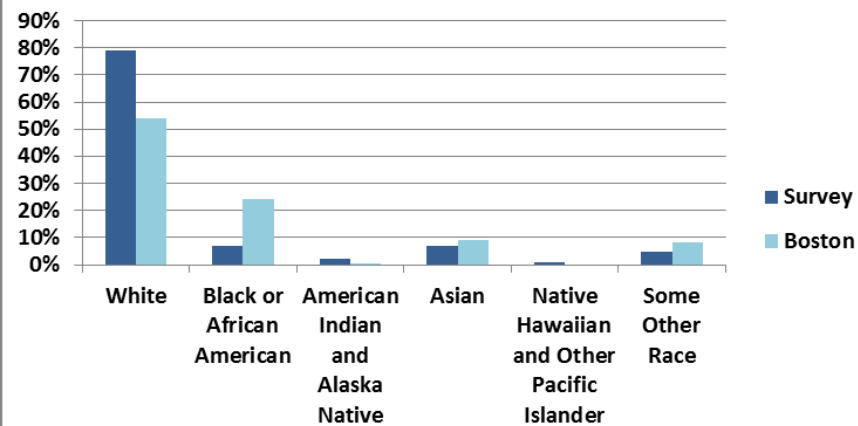
What are your priorities for the SERVICES the Parks Department provides in maintaining and improving parks?

Demographics of the Citywide Survey Results

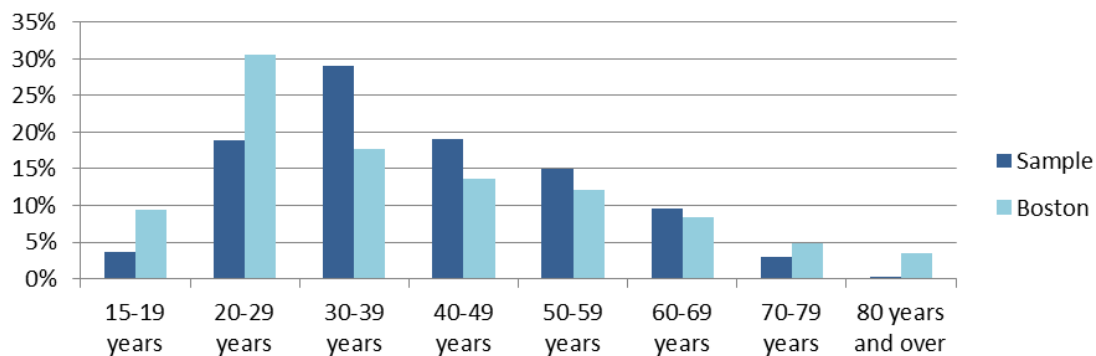
Gender



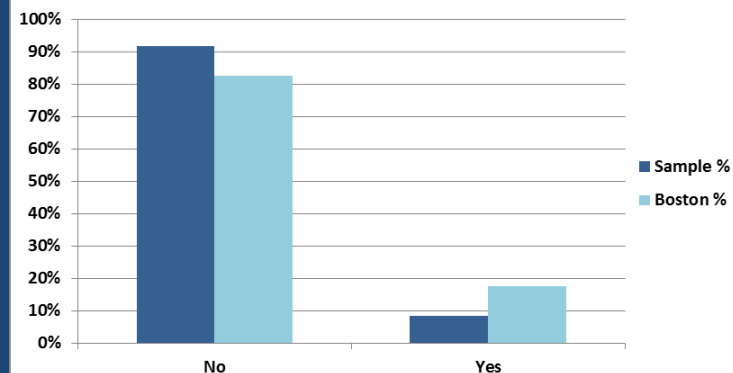
Race



Present Age Group

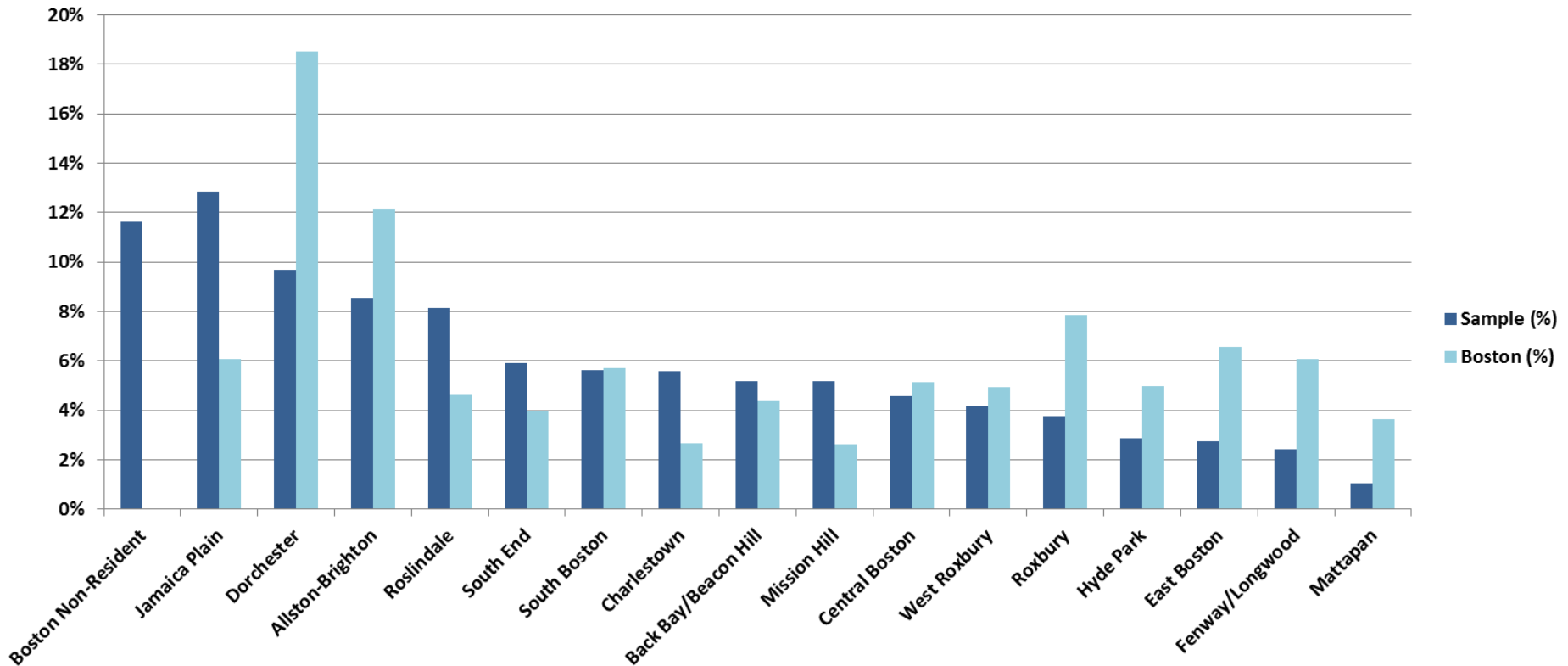


Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin



Demographics of the Citywide Survey Results

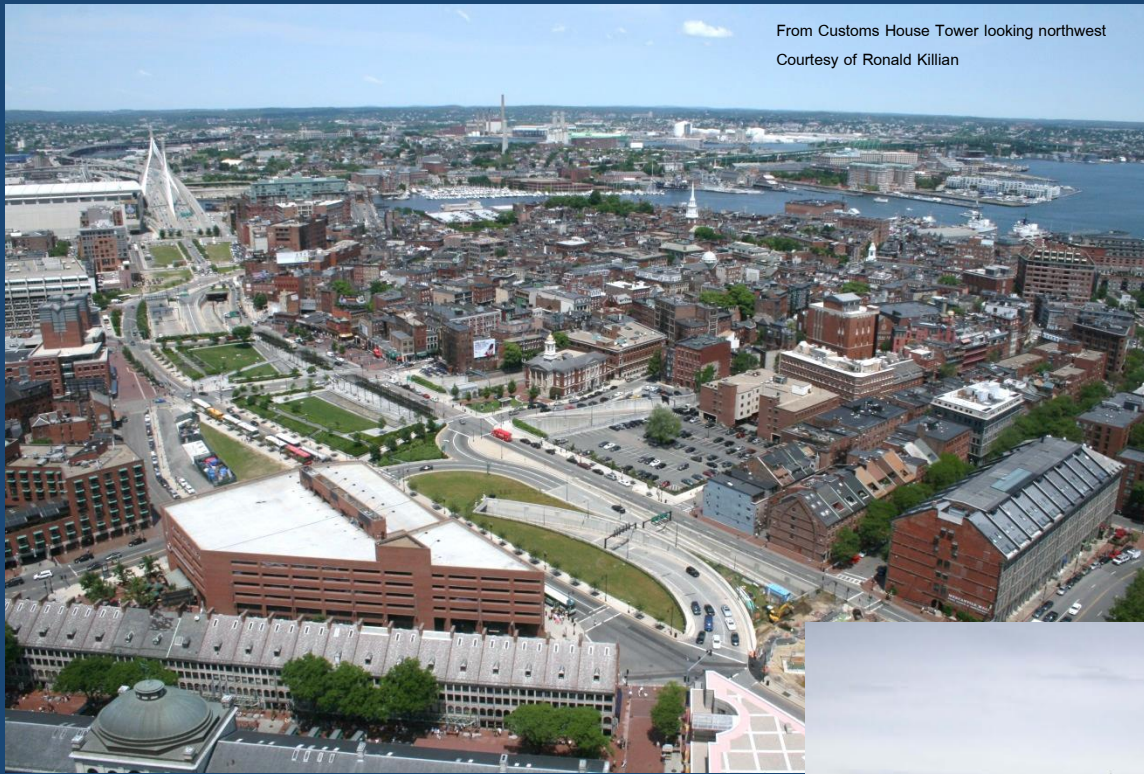
Respondents' Communities of Residence



Key Findings from the Citywide Survey Results

- The survey data indicates that passive and natural areas in parks are highly valued and need to be considered as part of capital planning processes and maintenance protocols.
- The emphasis on these areas vs. more traditional park features may be due in part to the demographics of those who responded to the survey.
- Other sources of information – like permitting requests – demonstrate the heavy use and value of athletic facilities in parks.
- Baseline maintenance to keep parks clean, litter free and in good repair is highly valued.

From Customs House Tower looking northwest
Courtesy of Ronald Killian



Neighborhood Open Space Inventory and Analysis

Central Boston, Beacon Hill and Back Bay

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Art Commission State House Boston



Central Boston

Existing Open Space

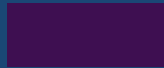
- Parks
- Playgrounds
- Athletic Fields
- Parkways & Reservations
- Community Gardens
- Cemeteries
- Urban Wilds
- Conservation Lands
- Public Plazas and Squares



Central Boston

Population Density

Most dense



Least dense



Central Boston

Distribution of Park Facilities

- Park playlots (play structures) ●
- Water spray features ●
- Public School playlots ●

Note: Facilities data is still being updated, some facilities may not be represented

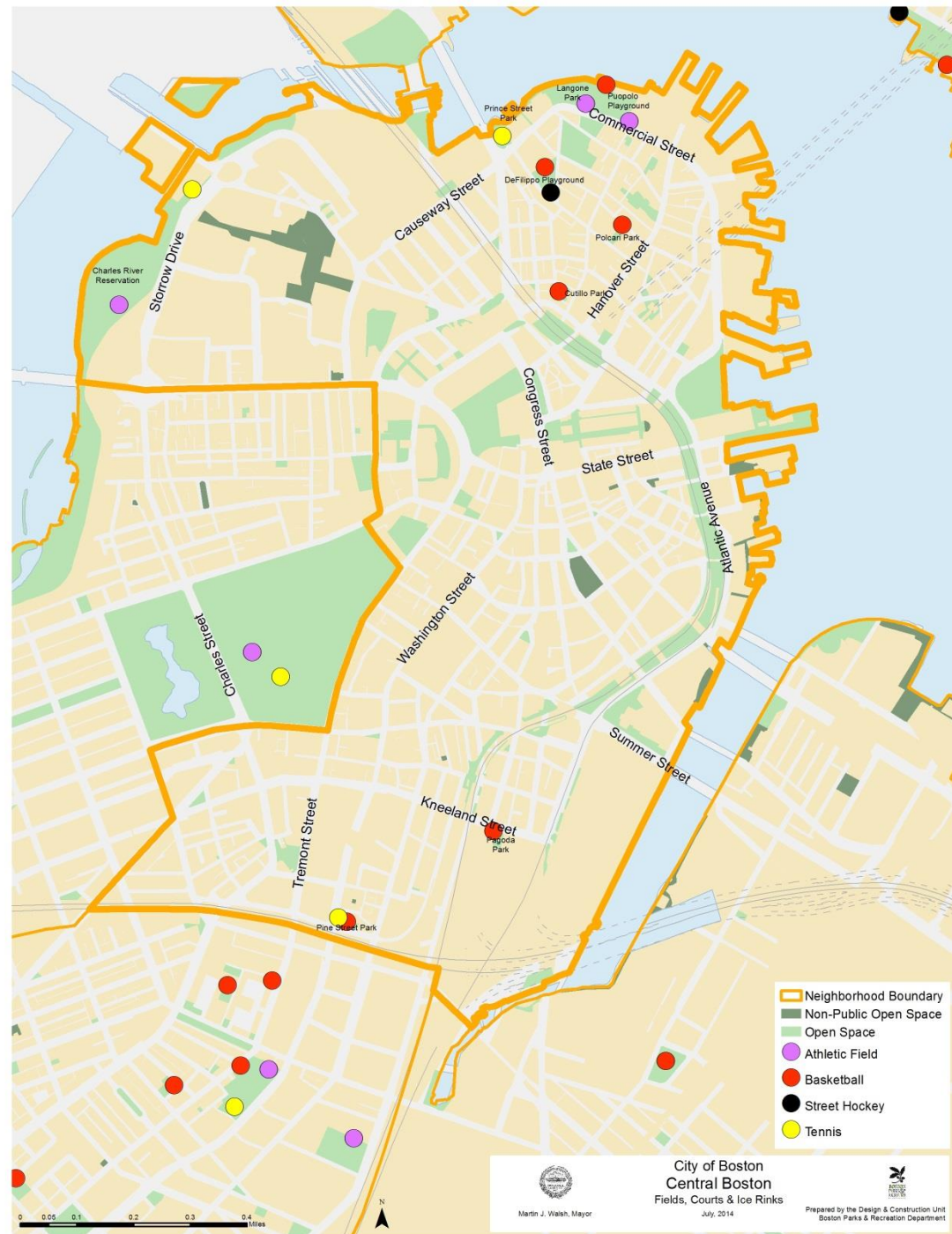


Central Boston

Distribution of Park Facilities

- Athletic Fields ●
- Basketball Courts ●
- Street Hockey Courts ●
- Tennis Courts ●

Note: Facilities data is still being updated, some facilities may not be represented



Central Boston

Neighborhood Activity Areas

- City Community Centers 
- Other Community Centers  
(Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA)
- Libraries 
- Public Schools 
- Non-Public Schools 



Back Bay & Beacon Hill

Existing Open Space

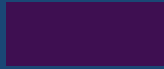
- Parks
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Back Bay & Beacon Hill

Population Density

Most dense



Least dense



Back Bay & Beacon Hill

Distribution of Park Facilities

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Back Bay & Beacon Hill

Distribution of Park Facilities

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Back Bay & Beacon Hill

Neighborhood Activity Areas

- City Community Centers ◆
- Other Community

Centers ◆ ◆

(Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA)

- Libraries ◆
- Public Schools □
- Non-Public Schools ■



Determining Park “Service Areas”

Park Categories:

- Pocket Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks

This analysis helps us understand where in the city people have good access to parks.

Big parks serve more people than small parks do.

Example Neighborhood



Determining Park “Service Areas”

Park Categories:

- Pocket Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks

Pocket-parks: <0.25 acres

Usually these are squares and plazas.

Pocket-parks serve people who live within a couple of blocks (0.1 mile)

Example Neighborhood



Determining Park “Service Areas”

Park Categories:

- Pocket Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks

Neighborhood Parks:
0.25 acres – 5 acres

Usually these parks include a mix of facilities.

Neighborhood parks serve people who live within a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile distance (5 minute walk).

Example Neighborhood



Determining Park “Service Areas”

Park Categories:

- Pocket Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks

Community Parks: > 5 acres

These are large properties with many features.

Community Parks serve people who live within a ½ mile walking distance (10 minute walk).

Many additional users of Community Parks drive or use transit for access.

Example Neighborhood



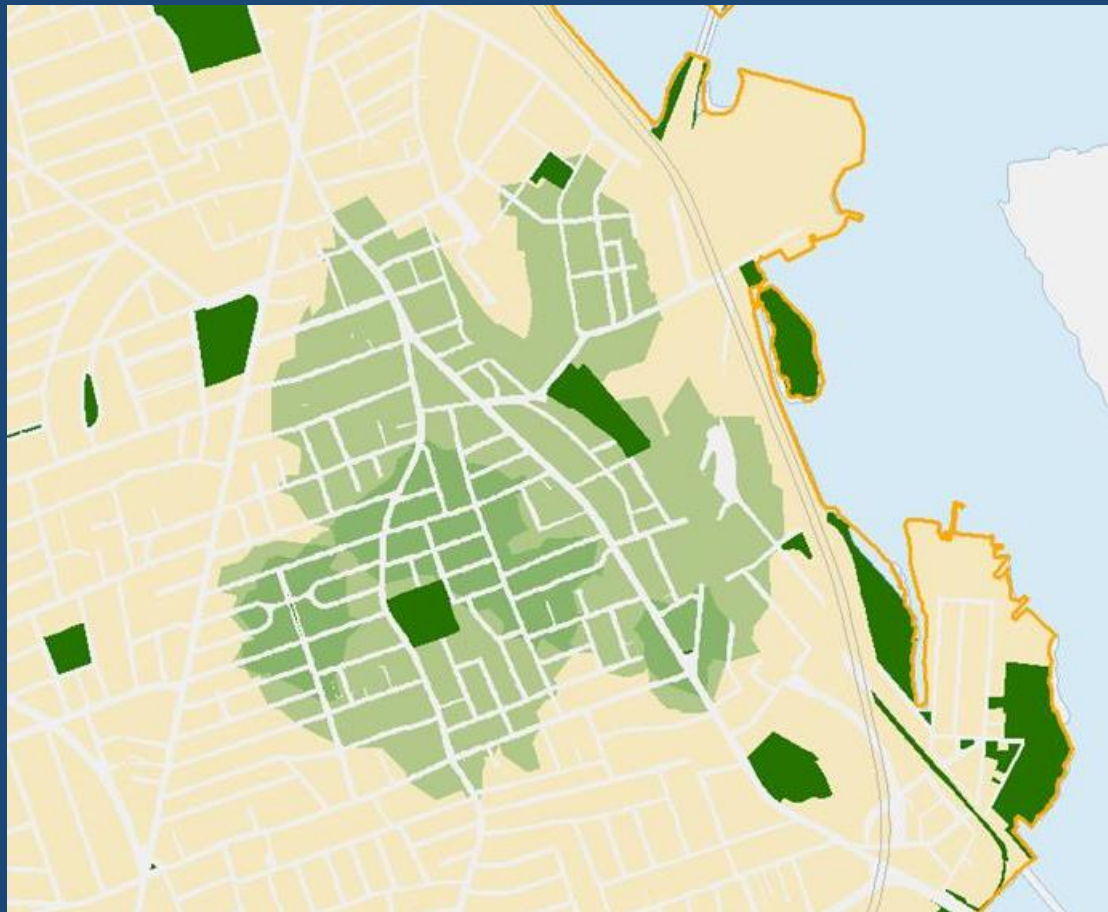
Determining Park “Service Areas”

Park Categories:

- Pocket Parks
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- Community Parks

These park “Service Areas” can overlap which illustrates that some residents have access to more than one park within close walking distance.

Example Neighborhood



Determining Park “Service Areas”

Park Categories:

- Pocket Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks

Most residents have at least one park within close walking distance but some do not.

Example Neighborhood



Central Boston

Which areas in Central Boston are well-served by parks?

Areas with best park proximity



Areas with limited park proximity



Note: Parks outside of the City of Boston are not represented.



Back Bay & Beacon Hill

Which areas in Back Bay / Beacon Hill are well-served by parks?

Areas with best park proximity



Areas with limited park proximity



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These maps represent where we are today. Now we need to look forward.

How do we take care of what we have?

What are we lacking and where?

What do we need to do better?

Each of these questions informs our Goals and Objectives for the future of our parks and open space system.

Framework Goals & Objectives for Open Space Planning, Design, and Maintenance 2015-2021

1. Be good stewards of the exceptional open space system we have inherited
2. Plan for our future park system
3. Be leaders in improving the urban environment



Framework Goals & Objectives for the Open Space Plan

1. Be good stewards of the exceptional open space system we have inherited

- Create, restore and sustain maintainable, climate-prepared landscapes
- Value and protect our park system's cultural and historic resources
- Renovate parks according to facility life cycles
- Look for ways to make the most of our existing park system
 - Multi-purpose facilities
 - Play Value
 - Community engagement

2. Plan for our future park system

- Expand and improve open space access for all (existing and projected) city residents (Access: ADA, Park Hours, Transit, Park Facilities)
 - Partnerships
 - Non-standard park spaces – School yards, Institutions etc.
 - Support community-led initiatives
 - Consider open space in all planning and development decisions
 - Acquisition / creation of new open spaces
- Support city-wide initiatives to enhance the public realm
 - Complete Streets – Boston Transportation Department
 - Green Links – Boston Transportation Department
 - Safe Routes to Parks – Public Works Department
 - BRA Zoning and Planning
 - Boston Bikes

3. Be leaders in improving the urban environment

- Implement and evaluate sustainable strategies for park design & maintenance
 - Maintenance needs and protocols
 - Energy efficiency and resource consumption
 - Shade / outdoor comfort
- Protect and enhance our natural resource areas
 - Facilitate public access
 - Promote ecological value
- Understand the importance of open space resources in mitigating climate change impacts and establish benchmark goals for making improvements
 - Tree canopy expansion
 - Stormwater management
 - Resilient landscapes & buffer landscapes

Framework Goals & Objectives for the Open Space Plan

Areas of ongoing attention:

- Developing & strengthening partnerships
- Dog concerns
- Recreation opportunities
- Management of natural resource areas
- Maintenance and operations challenges
- Park repairs and upgrades
- Constituent outreach and feedback

Our 7 Year Action Plan will work to address these issues within the framework of our Open Space Goals and Objectives

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For more information

If you have questions or comments about the Open Space Plan:

openspaceplan2015@cityofboston.gov

You can see this presentation again and share ideas through the City's *Greenovate Boston* on-line engagement tool:

<http://engage.greenovateboston.org>

If you are interested in starting or joining a Friends group to support your neighborhood park:

parkpartners@boston.gov

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Park Line 617-635-PARK (7275)

Mayor's Hotline 617-635-4500



THANK YOU!